



**THE STRUGGLES OF THE FEMALE PROTAGONIST AGAINST THE
OPPRESSION IN *ROOM* A NOVEL BY EMMA DONOGHUE**

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Bachelor Degree Majoring Literature in English Department
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

Submitted by:

IKHTIARINA PUTRI S.

NIM: 13020113190042

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY**

SEMARANG

2018

PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly confirms that she compiles this thesis by herself and without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains also that she does not quote any material from other publications or someone's paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, January 2018

Ikhtiarina Putri S.

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Nothing should ever be taken for granted.

Anonymous

"Scared is what you're feeling," says Ma, "but brave is what you're doing."

Room by Emma Donoghue

Fighting has been enjoined you, while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.

QS Al-Baqarah: 216

This paper is dedicated to

My beloved family and

to everyone who helped me accomplished this paper.

**THE STRUGGLES OF THE FEMALE PROTAGONIST AGAINST THE
OPPRESSION IN *ROOM* A NOVEL BY EMMA DONOGHUE**

Written by:

Ikhtiarina Putri S.

NIM: 13020113190042

is approved by thesis advisor

on January 26, 2018

Thesis Advisor,

Dr. Ratna Asmarani, M.Ed., M.Hum.

NIP 19610226 198703 2 001

The Head of English Department,

Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A.

NIP 19640814 199001 1 001

VALIDATION

Approved by

Strata 1 Thesis Examination Committee

Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

on February 26, 2018

Chair Person,

First Member,

Drs. Siswo Harsono, M. Hum.

Dra. Christina Resnitriwati, M. Hum.

NIP 19640418 199001 1 001

NIP 19560216 198303 2 001

Second Member,

Third Member,

Ariya Jati, S.S., M.A.

Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A.

NIP 19780228 200501 1 001

NIP 19640814 199001 1 001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to Allah SWT, who has given strength and true spirit so this thesis on “The Stuggles of the Female Protagonist against the Oppression in *Room* a Novel by Emma Donoghue” came to a completion. On this second occasion, I would like to thank all those people who have contributed to the completion of this research report.

The writer’s deepest gratitude and appreciation are extended to Dr. Ratna Asmarani, M.Ed., M.Hum., as her academic advisor, who has given her continuous guidance, helpful correction, advice, and suggestion while finishing this thesis.

I especially extend a sincere gratitude to the following:

1. Dr. Rediyanto Noor, M.Hum., as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University;
2. Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A., as the Head of the English Department of the Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University;
3. All lecturers of English Department, especially in Literature major;
4. My beloved family, Ibu Sri Wahyuningsih, Bapak Suroso, Dek Ama, thank you for the unconditional love, endless support and prayer;
5. My best mates, Risma Sinta Primadany, Millah Nur Chanifah, Denissa Lalitya, and Muhammad Taufik Wibowo, thank you for sharing the same interests and ideas, thank you for every unexpected moment, unforgettable laughter, joy, and madness;

6. My Paramount FLS, Glenysz, Anna, Jamal, Megalistha, and also LOnglast, Rafly, Mba Dea, and Mba Tiya, the best team I have ever worked with, I am beyond blessed to meet you all;
7. My closest friends in college, Shiela Agatha, Sheila Jingga, Niken Larasati, Satrio Jagad, Angga Ferdian, and Erizal Mahardika, thank you for the unforgettable moments together.
8. My best pals, Royyan, Intan, Anggita, Dewangga, Naja, Ervan, Aziz, Eky, Senmen, Bagus, thank you for the long-lasting friendship;
9. My ‘Mengejar Matahari’ team, Adit, Hadiri, and Luhung, you guys should know that I never regret anything, thank you for making my life so extra.
10. All my friends in B class, Literature class, and English Department batch 2013, thank you for every unforgettable moment in my life.

The writer realizes that this thesis is still far from perfect. Therefore she will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this thesis better.

Finally, the writer expects that this thesis will be useful to the readers.

Semarang, January 26, 2018

Ikhtiarina Putri Shalehah

TABLE OF CONTENT

TITLE	i
PRONOUNCEMENT	ii
MOTTO AND DEDICATION	iii
APPROVAL.....	iv
VALIDATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENT	viii
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of The Study	1
1.2. Research Problems	2
1.3. Objectives of The Study	2
1.4. Methods of Study	3
1.5. Organization of the Writing	3
CHAPTER 2 BIOGRAPHY AND SUMMARY	5
2.1. Biography of the Author	5
2.2. Summary of <i>Room</i>	6
CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	10
3.1. Intrinsic Elements.....	10
3.1.1.Character.....	10
3.1.2.Conflict	11
3.1.3.Setting.....	12
3.1.3.1. Setting of Place	12
3.1.3.2. Setting of Time	13
3.1.3.3. Setting of Social Environment.....	13
3.2. Extrinsic Elements.....	13
3.2.1.Feminism	13
3.2.2.Patriarchal System	15

3.2.3.Oppression	17
3.2.3.1. The Forms of Oppression	18
3.2.3.2. The Effect of Oppression.....	20
3.2.4.Suicide in Women’s Health.....	22
3.2.5.Power Feminism	23
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS.....	25
4.1. Intrinsic Elements.....	25
4.1.1.Characters in <i>Room</i>	25
4.1.1.1. The Protagonist Characters in Room.....	25
4.1.1.1.1. Ma: The Female Protagonist Character.....	25
4.1.1.1.2. Jack.....	27
4.1.1.2. The Antagonist Characters in Room	28
4.1.1.2.1. Old Nick: The Captor	28
4.1.1.2.2. Dr. Clay	29
4.1.1.3. The Helper Characters	30
4.1.1.3.1. Noreen	30
4.1.1.3.2. Grandma	30
4.1.1.4. The Opposite Characters in <i>Room</i>	31
4.1.1.4.1. Grandpa	31
4.1.2.Conflict	32
4.1.2.1. Internal Conflict.....	32
4.1.2.2. External Conflicts	33
4.1.3.The Setting.....	35
4.1.3.1. The Setting of Place.....	35
4.1.3.2. The Setting of Time.....	37
4.1.3.3. The Setting of Social Environment	37
4.2. Extrinsic Elements.....	38

4.2.1. The Issue of Feminism	38
4.2.2. The Patriarchal Society.....	40
4.2.3. The Oppression.....	44
4.2.3.1. Room: Subjective and Material Oppression.....	44
4.2.3.2. Cumberland Clinic: Objective and Psychological Oppression	47
4.2.4. The Struggles of the Female Protagonist to Overcome the Oppression.....	49
4.2.5. The Effect of Oppression on the Female Protagonist.....	51
4.2.5.1. Suicide of the Female Protagonist.....	53
4.2.6. The Power Feminism.....	55
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59

ABSTRACT

This research analyses a novel by Emma Donoghue entitled *Room* and focuses on the female protagonist character who gets locked in a place called Room for years. The aims of this study are to analyze the struggles of the female protagonist against oppression, to explain the effects of oppression on the female protagonist character, and to know how she overcome the oppression. The writer uses feminist theory and patriarchal theory to analyze the female protagonist's struggles against the oppression. The writer uses the method of library research to collect the data from books, journals, and websites. It can be found that the female protagonist faces many forms of oppression that caused by the patriarchal society. The conclusion that can be drawn is the female protagonist successfully overcomes the oppression by raising her power feminism.

Keywords: Feminism, Patriarchal Society, Oppression, Power Feminism

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis novel dari Emma Donoghue berjudul *Room* dan berfokus kepada tokoh perempuan yang dipenjara selama bertahun-tahun dalam sebuah tempat bernama Room. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis perjuangan tokoh perempuan melawan opresi, menjelaskan efek dari opresi yang dialami tokoh perempuan, dan mengetahui bagaimana tokoh perempuan mengatasi opresi yang dirasakan. Penulis menggunakan teori feminis dan masyarakat patriarki untuk menganalisa perjuangan tokoh perempuan melawan opresi. Penulis menggunakan metode penelitian pustaka untuk mengumpulkan data dari buku-buku, jurnal, dan situs-situs di internet. Ditemukan bahwa tokoh perempuan menghadapi berbagai bentuk opresi yang disebabkan oleh lingkungan patriarki. Kesimpulan yang dapat diambil adalah tokoh perempuan telah berhasil menghadapi opresi dengan menyuarkan kekuatan feminis yang dimilikinya.

Kata Kunci: Feminisme, Masyarakat Patriarki, Opresi, Kekuatan Feminisme

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Study

The women existence is usually related to their physical and psychical appearance. How women are treated is often influenced by how the society wants them to be. Their shape, their skin color, and even their thoughts will be determined by the society around her. Women are easily formed by the society because the society expects women as a weak human being.

Being underestimated, women often become the target of the oppression. The position of women are inferior in the society compared to men. The reasons are caused by their body are weaker than those of man and women are mostly seen as economically dependent. The patriarchal society has caused this prejudice against women. As a result, the oppression created by the patriarchal society affects women identity and activity in the society. Women cannot express their talent and they should serve men.

Since literary work is not only about a simple writing but also a composition of many depictions, most of women writers write about the fact of women's oppression in their society. Literary work may also be defined as a social institution because it reflects the society. It will also have a power to construct the society, and women are no exception. Elaine Showalter states that women novelist uses a hidden solidarity in their writings shared with their colleagues and their readers (Showalter

in Habib, 2005: 691). Their purpose from writing a prose is to defend their existence and try to defeat the patriarchal society.

In *Room*, a novel written by Emma Donoghue, the writer finds out the depiction of feminist theory. *Room* tells a story about female struggles against the oppression in the patriarchal society. In every different room, the female protagonist will face another different form of oppression, thus, making her unable to be her own personhood and make her feel imprisoned. From this point of view, the writer will analyze and try to discover the struggles of the female protagonist against the oppression.

1.2. Research Problems

The research problems in this research are:

1. How does the female protagonist struggle against oppression?
2. How does the oppression affect the female protagonist character?
3. How does the female protagonist character overcome the oppression?

1.3. Objectives of The Study

The objectives of the study based on the research problems are:

1. To analyze the struggles of the female protagonist against oppression in every room in the novel.
2. To analyze what are the effects of oppression on the female protagonist character in the novel.
3. To analyze how the female overcome the oppression.

1.4. Methods of Study

The analyses of the female protagonist character in *Room* uses a method of library research. Theories adaptation derives from books and other media like searching the materials from the internet like electronic books and journal. Explained by Wellek and Warren, students are often use libraries as their source of materials so they should have the knowledge and familiarity of catalogues as well as other references books (1963:73).

This study will analyze the intrinsic elements including characters, conflict, and setting. In the extrinsic elements, the writer focuses on the oppression of women. The writer uses feminism approach as stated by Booker in the following quotation:

“Feminism literary criticism focuses on the relationship between literature and patriarchal biases in society and on the potential role that literature can play in overcoming such biases. Many feminist critics have persuasively argued that literature plays a central role in the development of social attitudes toward women and of women's attitudes toward themselves” (1998: 89).

The writer will also emphasize the theory of patriarchal society as it closely related to the socialist feminist. Patriarchal theory is used since it becomes a social alignment to oppress of women.

1.5. Organization of the Writing

This paper is arranged in chapters and sub-chapters as follows.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five sub-chapters. They are the Background of the Study, Research Problems, Objectives of

the Study, Methods of the Study, and Organization of the Study.

CHAPTER II BIOGRAPHY AND SUMMARY

In Chapter II, it contains a short biography of Emma Donoghue, the author of *Room*. It also contains the summary of *Room* as the main object of the research.

CHAPTER III THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It contains the theoretical framework which supports the study of the thesis. The theories deal with the definition and explanation of both intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements consist of character, conflict, and setting. Meanwhile, the extrinsic elements include the theory of feminism, patriarchal system, oppression, the struggles of women, women's suicide, and power feminism.

CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS

It contains the analyses and the explanation about the main object of the research the novel *Room*. The explanation correlates both the intrinsic and extrinsic elements.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

It concludes the analysis explained in the previous chapter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR AND SUMMARY OF *ROOM*

2.1. Biography of the Author

Emma Donoghue was born in Dublin, Ireland, October 1969. She has seven siblings and she is the youngest. Her father name is Denis Donoghue, he is an Irish literary critic, while her mother's name is Frances. She began to write when she was 23 and started to make an income from writing. In 1997, she got her Ph.D. from University of Cambridge with her research of friendship between men and woman in eighteenth-century English fiction. Donoghue was later moving from England, Ireland, and Canada, but then she decided to settle in London, Ontario with her partner Christine Roulston, her son Finn and her daughter Una.

According to an FAQ published on her website, Donoghue reveals her reason why she decided to stay in Canada. It is because "love of a Canadian" who refers to her partner, Chris. Donoghue is also a literary historian. Donoghue's first published book is telling about woman and lesbian entitled *Passions between Women: British Lesbian Culture 1668-1801*. It was first published in the United Kingdom in 1996 then followed by its publication in the US. In 2011, she also won National Lesbian and Gay Federation (Ireland) Person of the Year Award. Donoghue also writes both stage and radio drama. Her first five works of theater are published by Oberon Books entitled *Emma Donoghue: Selected Plays*.

Donoghue writes so many genres, but she is best known for as fiction writer. *Room* has become her first novel that made into a movie. The movie version of

Room is nominated for The Best Movie in Academy Award in 2016, and the leading actress plays as Ma, Brie Larson, is the winner of Best Actress Academy Award. She says that *Room* is inspired by the Fritzl family in Austria who escape from a dungeon. *Room*, which is a locked room, is also part of the metaphor for the claustrophobic. Also inspired by the true story, her new book entitled *The Wonder* is out this year.

2.2. Summary of *Room*

Talking about *Room* as cited in her official website, Donoghue reveals that *Room* is a “metaphor for the claustrophobic and a tender bond of parenthood”. Besides, using Rapunzel as an example, Donoghue states that *Room* is also inspired by “ancient folk motifs of walled-up virgins who give birth”. *Room* itself is divided into five chapters: Presents, Unlying, Dying, After, and Living.

Room is an eleven-by-eleven foot place where Ma and Jack are being locked for years. It is the first place where Ma, as the female protagonist character, experiences multiple assaults for the first time. She is only nineteen when she comes to Room. A man called Old Nick kidnapped her and force her to fulfill his desire. In the first period of her imprisonment in Room, she is nearly getting insane because she cannot escape from Room. Old Nick has made Room as a soundproof cell with a fence hide on every side. The younger Ma tries many ways to escape, yet she failed in every try.

In Room, she raises her only child, Jack, with the best care. Jack is Ma’s second children. Ma once gave birth to a baby girl but she died. It becomes one of

the reasons why Ma is overprotective to Jack. She does not let Old Nick meet Jack and she will shut Jack in the Wardrobe every night when Old Nick comes to Room. After Jack's 5th birthday, Ma begins to think about escaping again. She discovered that Old Nick is in a foreclosure, it means that sooner or later Old Nick will abandon them in Room forever. Ma makes Jack "deathly ill" with diarrhea to deceive Old Nick. The Great Escape is yet to come: making Jack die, laying him on Rug, and Old Nick will bring him outside. It is hard to make Jack believe about The Great Escape, but Ma has her own way to make Jack strong enough to do it.

After successfully coming out from Room with The Great Escape, Ma and Jack are going to Cumberland Clinic for having a care, it is a mental health hospital. Ma and Jack meet Dr. Clay and Noreen as their assistant. For the first time, Ma thinks that she can be free from oppression in Room, in facts she meets the doctor and the nurse that control her every day. Ma wonders why she and Jack must enter the mental health hospital while what she thinks about being outside is being free. She begins to refuse everything she does not accustom to, includes the nurse dolling up her medications. She denies about her son's and her own condition that they are not sick.

The conflict arises when Ma and Jack discover that they are being famous. They cannot go outside because paparazzi are waiting outside the building. They cannot have freedom because they get judgment from the newspapers and TVs. Later on, Ma discovers that her parents are divorced, her mother (Grandma) is having a new husband and her father (Grandpa) is moving to Australia. Her parents think that she has died years ago. In the beginning, Ma does not have a problem

dealing with her mother's new husband and she is perfectly fine with her mother's new life. On the contrary, her father is a little bit shocked to find out that Ma is alive with her child. He cannot accept the fact that his daughter has come back with a son. From this point, Ma feels that her surrounding is not support her and has denied her.

The climax arises when Ma faces the interviewer from a TV. The main reason why she wants to go to interview is that she wants to raise Jack's college fund. Dr. Clay as her doctor and Morris as her lawyer push her to go to the interview. When the interview is going, Ma often gets mad at the interviewer's questions. Suddenly, in one of the sessions, Ma says to the interviewer that she has become a Stepford wife in Room. The interview is not going well, at the end of the interview, she is found crying. The next day, Ma is having a depressive time where she wants to be alone. She wants to stay the Room Number Seven and lets Jack go outside without her. Coming back from the museum, Jack finds out that his Ma is committing suicide.

For the first time, Ma and Jack are separated. Ma stays longer in Cumberland Clinic to have an intensive care, while Jack is going home with his Grandma. In the clinic, Ma heals herself away from other people who often hurt her with the help of Dr. Clay and Noreen. She gets a special treatment for weeks so she can go back to her son later. Jack, who never separated from his Ma, tries to learn how to live in his own body with the help of Grandma.

Coming back from Cumberland Clinic, Ma decided to live independently in Independent Living with Jack. She wants to start a new better life and take her pain

away. In the end, Jack wants to see Room once again to say goodbye. She agrees with Jack's idea and calls the police to accompany her to go to Room. Jack makes her realize that she should visit Room once again and deal with her past in Room.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Intrinsic Elements

Intrinsic elements cannot be separated from literary works. Intrinsic elements include all elements which exist in every literary work. In this chapter, the intrinsic elements will be divided into character, conflict, and setting.

3.1.1. Character

We will find a character in almost all the literary works especially prose. It is one of the most important elements in fiction. According to Potter, character is the basic element that exists in every literary work that aims to have a “considerable attention paid to them” (1967:1). The character will be divided into protagonist and antagonist. Holman described protagonist as “the leading character in any work of fiction” (Holman, 1980: 355). The example of the protagonist in a literary work is Macbeth in *Macbeth*. The opposite of the protagonist is the antagonist. The antagonist is a character who stands against the protagonist and becomes the rival of the protagonist (Holman, 1980: 25).

In addition to the protagonist and antagonist, there are also another characters called as subordinate characters. The subordinate characters will focus on the helper and the opposer. The helper and the opposer tend to be the projections of will to act by the subject himself and it could be harmful or beneficial in the relation to the leading character (Woloch, 1970: 89). In another words, the helper is someone who motivate the protagonist and the opposer is someone who set out

obstacles that the protagonist must surmount. The helper and opposer present as the important character in the story but it will not focus on their role.

The example of the helper is the character of Charlotte Lucas in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Charlotte becomes someone who have a firmly responsive mode, reacting to or modifying Elizabeth Bennet's thoughts. While the opposer is shown in Colonel Fitzwilliam who oppose Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's marriage (Woloch, 1970: 90).

3.1.2. Conflict

Plot is one of the most important parts of a narrative. According to Potter, "a plot is based on a series of events that are all partly the result of some continuing cause" (1967: 24). It means that one event can cause the other event and it will continue to make a sequence forward.

Conflict is an important part of plot that will make a story more thrilling and alive. Conflict will make the reader become more curious about what will happen in a story and persuade the reader to keep reading. According to Potter, the word "conflict" is very common and it is "the result of an opposition between at least two sides" (1967: 25). Meanwhile, Perrine states that conflict is "a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills" (1998: 20). In other words, conflict happens in many forms. Holman states that a protagonist character may face four different kinds of conflict.

(1) a struggle against the forces of nature, as in Jack London's "To Build a Fire"; (2) a struggle against another person, usually antagonist, as in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and most melodrama; (3) a struggle against society as a force, as in the novels of Dickens and George Eliot, or (4) a struggle mastery by two elements within the person, as in the Restoration Heroic Drama or in *Macbeth* (1985: 98).

In *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, Michael Meyer states there are two types of conflict; internal and external conflict. Internal conflict according to Meyer is a conflict between man and himself or usually called as inner conflict. Moreover, external conflict is when the protagonist is on the opposite side of another individual, nature, or society (1990: 45).

3.1.3. Setting

Setting is one of the literary elements that will help to develop the plot. For the readers, setting can help them to imagine and visualize when and where the story happens. According to Meyer “setting can be used to evoke a mood or atmosphere that will prepare the reader for what is to come” (1990: 107). Whereas, Holman describes setting as “the physical, and sometimes spiritual, background against which the action of a narrative (novel, drama, short story, poem) takes place” (1985: 413). In the chapter, setting will be divided into setting of place, setting of time, and setting of environment.

3.1.3.1. Setting of Place

The setting of place is where an action takes place in a literary work. The definition of setting of place is “the actual geographical location, its topography, scenery, and such physical arrangements as the location of the windows and doors in a room” (Holman, 1985: 413). As setting of place is a substantial element in every fiction, it will influence every element of the story. It will also give the sensation of the story, for example in adventure stories; the use of outdoor places and the capture of wildness will be mainly concerned.

3.1.3.2. Setting of Time

Setting of time shows and gives a focus on when the story happens. Holman states that setting of time is a time or period when an action takes place, like an epoch in history or season of the year (1985: 413). Setting of time can be the current time or even the historical time.

3.1.3.3. Setting of Social Environment

Setting of social environment explains about the social condition that occurs in the story. Roberts in *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing* defined setting as “A work’s natural, manufactured, political, cultural, and temporal environment, including everything that characters know and own” (1988: 253). It means that setting of social environment includes everything that exists in the surrounding of the characters and directly affects the characters. Holman argues that setting of social environment is “the occupation and daily manner of living” (1985: 423). From Holman’s, setting of environment not only shows how the society works on the individual in a group but also the behavior and daily manner.

3.2. Extrinsic Elements

3.2.1. Feminism

Feminism is generally described as the intellectual and political movement related to women’s condition who is treated unjustly by the society dominated by men. De Beauvoir on *The Second Sex* states that “[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society” (De Beauvoir, 1956: 274). To relate, women are not born with a status, but men determine the position of women in society.

Whereas, De Beauvoir states that women do not belong to the essential characteristic of “femininity” and the “femininity” is constructed because of certain cultural, social, and linguistic practices (De Beauvoir, 1956: 274). The status of women in society is not originally born, but it is made and constructed during their relationship with some cultural, social, and linguistic aspects.

Feminism appears to challenge and transform how women are represented and treated by the society. According to M. Keith Booker, “modern feminist seeks to challenge the tradition and conventions of ‘patriarchal’ society that is biased on premise of masculine authority” (1998: 89). Feminism is categorized as a political movement or transcription that comprises a diverse gap of methods, theories, and also perspectives. Katie Garner and Rebecca Munford have divided feminism into three different feminist politics:

“liberal feminism, which focuses on achieving full equality and opportunities within existing social structures; radical feminism, which is revolutionary rather than reformative in its conviction that creating alternative, woman-centered institutions and realities will bring about social change; and socialist feminism, which sees “femaleness” and “femininity” as socially and historically contingent, and is concerned with the economic and cultural contexts of women’s oppression” (2011: 595).

From these classifications, this chapter will mainly concern about the social feminism. Social feminism is closely related to Marxist feminism. Social feminism appears as the result of Marxist feminism’s thought that the class of sex and economy affect the oppression of women. According to Rosemarie Tong, the specific goal of social feminism “was to develop a theory powerful enough to explain the complex ways in which capitalism and patriarchy allied to oppress

women” (2013: 108). Significantly, what differs social feminism to Marxist feminism is the goal of social feminism.

The Social feminism appears as the result of the global economic realities affect women disproportionately. Nancy Holmstrom in Rosemarie Tong states that:

Displaced by economic changes, women bear a greater burden of labor throughout the world as social services have been cut, whether in response to structural adjustment plans in the third world or to so-called welfare reform in the United States. Women have been forced to migrate, are subject to trafficking, and are the proletarians of the newly industrializing countries. On top of all this they continue to be subject to sexual violence and in much of the world are not allowed to control their own processes of reproduction (Holmstrom in Tong, 2013:116).

Since socialist feminist cannot be separated from capitalism and patriarchy, therefore Holmstrom added that “feminism that speaks of women’s oppression and its injustice but fails to address capitalism will be of little help in ending women’s oppression” (Holmstrom in Tong, 2013: 116).

Holmstrom agrees that “socialist feminism is the approach with the greatest capacity to illuminate the exploitation and oppression of most of the women of the world” (Tong, 2013: 116). In accordance with Holmstrom, Tong believes that the fundamental goal of social feminism is to unite women oppose oppression, inequality, and injustice in whatever ways (2013: 123).

3.2.2. Patriarchal System

The patriarchal society can be examined as a society based on an idea or male domination as the embodiment of the opinion of the father as the head of the family. Kate Millet states that the basis of patriarchy is the family which becomes a patriarchal unit within the patriarchal whole (1972: 33). As the basic patriarchal

system in the society, the family governs the patriarchal system through the head of the family.

Patriarchal society appears as the result of male domination over female based on the traditional belief that male is superior to the female. As stated by Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Booker, “patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male, and this power is exerted, directly or indirectly, in civil and domestic life to constrain women” (2005: 123). Patriarchy marginalizes the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior, and this power is directly or indirectly used in a social or smaller range in life to enforce women. It can be concluded that women are experiencing patriarchal system both in the family and in society.

Patriarchy is controlled by men because men are trying to search for social status. As a result, patriarchy emerges as the oppression of women. There are many reasons why men are practicing patriarchal system in society. Allan G. Johnson in *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy* mentioned that:

Perhaps more than anything else, what drives patriarchy as a system—what fuels competition, aggression, and oppression—is a dynamic relationship between control and fear. Patriarchy encourages men to seek security, status, and other rewards through control, to fear other men’s ability to control and harm them, and to identify being in control as both their best defense against loss and humiliation and the surest route to what they need and desire. In this sense, although we usually think of patriarchy in terms of women and men, it is more about what goes on among men. The oppression of women is certainly an important part of patriarchy, but, paradoxically, it may not be the *point* of patriarchy (Johnson, 2005: 53).

However, we cannot separate a male domination with women’s oppression. Although it is not the only purpose of the male domination, oppression of women happens to fulfill men’s need and desire.

3.2.3. Oppression

Oppression is one of the social phenomena that is very close to the feminist movements. Marilyn Frye argues that oppression comes from the element of “press”. Something pressed is something that cannot be separated from forces and barriers which are connected to each other and being united to restrain, restrict, or prevent the thing’s movement and mobility, at any rate, it “Mold. Immobilize. Reduce” (Frye, in Bailey and Cuomo, 2008: 43).

In the term of oppression, Charlton states that “oppression occurs when individuals are systematically subjected to political, economic, cultural, or social degradation because they belong to a social group” (1998: 8). In consonance with Charlton, Ann Cudd describes oppression as “a harm through which groups of persons are systematically and unfairly or unjustly constrained, burdened, or reduced by any of several forces” (2006: 23). Thus, oppressed person is someone who is being pressed in a social injustice situation.

In accordance with Charlton, Frye sums up that if an individual is being oppressed, it means that they are being a member of a social group or category of people (Frye, in Bailey and Cuomo, 2008: 44). It can be concluded that oppression occurs unjustly to people regardless of their sex, gender, race, nationality, or political views, as long as they are included in a group where they get oppressed and shaped.

In this case, a social group is not only a collective of people being together and become a community. Iris Young explains that social group is more fundamentally as “a specific kind of collectivity, with specific consequences for

how people understand one another and themselves. Yet neither social theory nor philosophy has a clear and developed concept of the social group” (Young, 2004: 40). The member of a group is connected and engaged to one another because he or she has similarities in experiences. A person’s history, affinity, and class will also be examined by a group. Although oppression may affect the whole group, oppression is mainly a suffering of an individual. Thus, oppression cannot be seen as a single or unified phenomenon because it will affect the whole of a system.

Oppressed people are being inhibited so they cannot express and develop their thoughts, needs, and also feelings. Frye in Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo’s *The Feminists Philosophy Reader* states that:

“The experience of oppressed people is that the living of one’s life is confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but are systematically related to each other in such a way as to catch one between and among them and restrict or penalize motion in any direction. It is the experience of being caged in: all avenues, in every direction, are blocked or booby trapped” (Frye, in Bailey and Cuomo, 2008: 43).

From Frye, it can be concluded that oppression will block and trap someone’s life as if he or she is being in a cage. Even though everyone could get a systematic oppression in every direction, not everyone faces the same oppression. Oppression becomes another form of imprisonment because the oppressed being confined as if they are in a cage.

3.2.3.1. The Forms of Oppression

Oppression comes from various different backgrounds in the society. Although anyone can face oppression, anyone does not suffer oppression in the same way. Oppression has many different forms and classifications according to its cause. Ann

Cudd in *Analyzing Oppression* (2006) has divided the form of oppression into several parts. There are subjective oppression, objective oppression, psychological oppression, and material oppression.

The first is subjective oppression. Ann Cudd argues that “Subjective oppression concerns the judgment or feeling by a person or persons that he or she or they are oppressed, that is, systematically and unjustly harmed as a member of a group” (2006: 23). This kind of oppression will systematically and unjustly harm someone who is being a member of a group and it is focused on the individual. Gary Jaeger adds that a person with subjective oppression tends to be easily recognized and overcome the oppression they experience (2012: 152).

The second is objective oppression. According to Ann Cudd, “Objective oppression concerns the fact of oppression... One can be objectively oppressed and not know it or feel it (thus not be subjectively oppressed), and one can judge wrongly or misperceive that one is oppressed, thus being subjectively but not objectively oppressed” (2006: 23). Objective oppression is external to the oppressed people and others can judge wrongly about their condition in the society. Therefore, Heidt and Wheeldon add that objective oppression refers to an apparent situation controlled by certain groups of people to the existing phenomena in society, for example, classicism, racism, sexism, and homophobia (2012).

Not only objective and subjective oppression, but Ann Cudd also distinguishes oppression into psychological and material oppression. Cudd states that “psychological oppression occurs when one is oppressed through one’s mental states, emotionally or by manipulation of one’s belief states, so that one is

psychologically stressed, reduced in one's own self-image, or otherwise psychically harmed" (2006: 24). Psychological oppression happens when one is being mentally and emotionally oppressed through the mental states. When someone is psychologically oppressed, he or she may feel shame and low self-worth.

The last is material oppression. It happens when one's physical being or one's material resources are harmed by oppression. As Cudd states, "material oppression occurs when one's physical being is harmed by oppression, or one's material resources, including wealth, income, access to health care, or rights to inhabit physical space, are reduced by oppression" (2006: 24). The material resources which are reduced according to material oppression include wealth, income, access to health care, or rights to inhabit physical space.

To sum up, Cudd has concluded that both psychological and material oppression have a close relationship to make a cause effect relationship and to aggravate the effects of each other.

3.2.3.2. The Effect of Oppression

Oppression often leads into several adverse effects because the oppressed people are facing a terrific pressure. As Marilyn Frye states, "one of the most characteristic and ubiquitous features of the world as experienced by oppressed people is the double bind—situations in which options are reduced to a very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure or deprivation" (2008: 42). Thus, oppressed people cannot be separated from a psychological harm.

Ann Cudd in *Analyzing Oppression* states that the harm of psychological oppression can be group-based or individual. As mentioned by Cudd, "Individual

psychological harm happens when one individual is abused by another person or persons not because of and not by means of their social group membership. The abuse may be violent or it may be psychological—words or actions” (Cudd, 2006: 155-156). In this case, the individual psychological forces are internal to the victim’s psychology in order to abuse and harm.

People who suffer from oppression is originally suffering from violence. Cudd argues that “violence or the threat of violence work to maintain an effective prison around the oppressed” (2006: 86). She also makes an addition that the social threat of violence by men against women is invisible but credible. Researches show that:

Women with substance abuse problems are more likely than men to have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse. A history of violent assault can increase the risk of substance use and post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental health problems. It has been reported that rates of post-traumatic stress disorder among women in substance abuse treatment range from 30 to 59 per cent (UNODC, 2014: 13).

Another serious problem from oppression is the damage of psychological effect of systematic violence. The person who is being a victim of violence will suffer from shame and the loss of self-esteem. It will make the victim unable to cope with the society. Ann Cudd states that the victim will be victimized thrice, “once by the violence, then again by the loss of self-worth that one feels when one has been dominated, humiliated, and violated, and then again by the loss of social ties and the ability to cope that these psychological states often bring about” (2006: 92).

In further analysis, the writer will analyze how far the individual psychological oppression affects female protagonist's behavior after she manages to go out from oppression.

3.2.4. Suicide in Women's Health

Suicide is when a person intentionally ends his or her life. Suicide happens as a result from several aspects such as social stressors, psychology, and biological factors. There are several factors that cause someone to attempt suicide. According to Loue and Sajatovic's *Encyclopedia of Women's Health*, the factors include "gender, age, marital status, psychiatric illness, substance abuse, occupation, physical health, and history of suicide attempts" (2004: 633).

In this case, suicide is being correlated with the effects of oppression. Most of these factors have a correlation with the damage of oppressive violation. Loue and Sajatovic state that women commit suicide more often than men. Men will use lethal methods including guns and hang, while women will tend to overdose in attempting suicide (2004: 633). Medical illness and psychiatric illnesses are the two largest factors in suicide. It is estimated that 95% of approximately 30.000 people with mental illness are committing suicide in the US (Loue & Sajatovic, 2004: 633). People with mental illness will kill themselves either in the beginning or at the end of their depressive time.

In addition to depression, psychological factors also play a big role in suicide. Warning signs of suicide can be seen when a person "telling others about their thoughts, preoccupation with death, or discussing feeling hopeless" (Loue &

Sajatovic, 2004: 633). Although we can learn about the warning signs, sometimes it cannot be used as the standards of someone who tend to attempt suicide.

To conclude, suicide in the women's health will be used in the extrinsic analysis to complete as well as to relate the extrinsic elements explained above about female protagonist's struggle to overcome oppression.

3.2.5. Power Feminism

Women's experiences can be connected to the nature of power. Talking about power in feminism, Christine Griffin in Charles and Freeland's *Practicing Feminism* distinguishes the relationship between women's experience and power. Griffin tries to see how women define power based on their experiences. In her example, Griffin describes that woman puts herself as a neutral individual (does not care about her sexual identity), then sees the power of men and women at a general level and she does not feel powerless from the threat of sexual violence (1998: 186).

From the example above, Griffin analyses that although the position of women is oppressed, it does not necessary to put them as a victim (1988: 187). In other words, Griffin tries to sum up that the woman sees that "perceived power was not gendered" and woman should refuse the position where she feels helpless or powerless (1996: 188).

In accordance with Griffin, Naomi Wolf in *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How to Use It*, states that because of the oppression, women can be reminded of their power, ability, and sense of responsibility (1994: 37). From this point of view, woman has the power to raise her voice and reach the basic feminist goal through the patriarchal society rather than being the "victim feminism".

“Victim feminism” itself stands for an action “when a woman seeks power through an identity of powerlessness” (Wolf, 1994: 135).

In power feminist, Wolf invites all the women to stand against the victim feminist. The following quotation will tell us about what power feminism is.

What is power feminism? It means taking practical giant steps instead of ideologically pure baby steps; practicing tolerance rather than self-righteousness. Power feminism encourages us to identify with one another primarily through the shared pleasures and strengths of femaleness, rather than primarily through our shared vulnerability and pain. It calls for alliances based on economic self-interest and economic giving back rather than on a sentimental and workable fantasy of cosmic sisterhood (Wolf, 1994: 53).

Power feminism encourages women to stand in their own feet and share “pleasure and strengths of femaleness”. Both Griffin and Wolf agree that women should unite their power to stand against the oppression. They believe that the goal of power feminism are to unite women oppose oppression, inequality, and injustice.

Power feminism will be used in the discussion in order to determine how the female protagonist is struggling to overcome the oppression. The extrinsic analysis, which involves feminism, patriarchal system, oppression, suicide, and power feminism, will be related to all the theoretical approach explained above. The intrinsic elements will be used to complete and to relate the analysis of extrinsic elements in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

4.1. Intrinsic Elements

In this chapter, there will be the analysis of the intrinsic elements of the novel. The intrinsic analysis will be divided into three chapters. The first is the analysis of the characters in *Room*, the second is the analysis of conflict, and the third is the analysis about the setting.

4.1.1. Characters in *Room*

Emma Donoghue uses Jack, a five years old boy, as the narrator in the novel *Room*. The discussion of characters will be divided into protagonist, antagonist, helper, and opposite characters. The protagonist characters in the novel are Ma and Jack. They are a mother and a son who are being locked by the antagonist character named Old Nick in an eleven-by-eleven foot place called Room. Therefore the helper characters are Noreen and Grandma, while the opposite characters are Morris and Grandpa.

4.1.1.1. The Protagonist Characters in *Room*

4.1.1.1.1. Ma: The Female Protagonist Character

Ma is the leading female character in the novel which then is mentioned as the female protagonist character and will be the center of the discussion. She is classified as the dynamic character because her character changes during the story. The changing of her character is influenced by people around her and how they treat her. Before she was locked in a place called Room by her captor, Ma is only an

ordinary college girl of 19. "'Old Nick--I didn't even know him, I was nineteen. He stole me.'" (Donoghue, 2010: 105). She was tricked by Old Nick when she is in the college library. Ma is also an adopted child. "'Well--actually no, I was adopted...'" (Donoghue, 2010: 93). In the novel, the author does not mention her real name until the end of the story.

In the first chapter of the novel, where Ma is locked in the Room, she does not look depressed and tends to be a normal mother to her child and a woman who is very obedient to man. Ma is also a loving and protective mother to Jack. She does not let anyone take him away from her, even for a minute. She does not that kind of person who easily gives up. She is very brave to confront her captor and to survive in Room. As a mother, she is very responsible and dedicates her life to her son. In Room, she plays with her son, educates him, and even still breastfeeds him. She is also barely angry in Room.

The changing of her character gradually happens when she is out of Room and meets other people. Ma starts to have a problem with controlling her emotion and easily getting mad at other people who treat her like a sick person. She later becomes depressed and it affects her to become rude that puts her son as the object of her anger.

"You'll be exhausted if you don't have a nap. Let go of me, please." Ma's taking my hands off her. I knot them around her tighter so she can't. "Jack!" "Stay."

I put my legs around her too.

"Get off me. I'm late already." Her hands are pressing my shoulders but I hold on even more. "You're not a baby. I said get off--"

Ma's shoving so hard, I suddenly come loose, her shove hits my head on little table *craaaaaack*.

She has her hand on her mouth.

I'm screaming.

(Donoghue, 2010: 257-258)

Meeting the doctors in Cumberland Clinic, she starts to cry and is mad for no apparent reason. She wants to be back on her previous “normal” life. Yet, she has a trouble to differentiate her rights and also her responsible: “... I know you need me to be your ma but I'm having to remember how to be me as well at the same time and it's . . .” (Donoghue, 2010: 248). Unfortunately, she cannot bear the society any longer and cannot run away from her past. It makes her depressed and tries to take her life with a bunch of pills. Ma gets time to heal herself separated from other people and her child to recover. She gradually changes into a better person and approves her new life. Jack has made her realize that she cannot move on to the future and start a new better life without seeing Room once again. The burden she bears and the struggles she has been through affect how her character changing. The analysis of the female protagonist character will further be explained in the extrinsic elements.

4.1.1.1.2. Jack

Jack is actually Ma’s second and only living child. He is a five years old boy who becomes the narrator of the novel *Room*. His character changes from the beginning until the end of the story. Jack is very close to Ma, and he cannot even get away from her. Jack has an important role in the emotional development that occurs in Ma as the female protagonist. As the protagonist, Jack presents to be the helper of Ma to overcome the oppression in Room.

He is born and lives in a very small place and could not see the world outside. In Room, his life is organized by Ma, and it makes him accustomed to a

structured life. When he is out from Room and discover the world outside, he starts to discover and differentiate new things. Before, he does not like the “persons looking” (Donoghue, 2010: 217). Later on, with the help of Ma’s brother, Paul, Jack discovered new people every day, visiting a new place, and adapting to new people. Paul also directly involves in Jack’s self-development.

Jack observes how Paul treats him and he learns how to be comfortable with Paul when they finally met for the first time in Cumberland Clinic. Paul calls Jack “buddy” as he tries to engage with Jack: ““Hey, buddy." Here's Paul my Uncle, I didn't know he was let in the dining room. I think *buddy* is man talk for *sweetie*” (Donoghue, 2010: 269). Paul helps Jack to find out things and to adjust to the society when Ma is in Cumberland. Jack gradually changes and learns how to live in his own body separated from his Ma. The other behavior changes that can be seen is he is no longer breastfed. Changing his appearance, Jack also decided to cut his hair off: “I get the scissors from the drawer and cut my ponytail all off” (Donoghue, 2010: 319).

4.1.1.2. The Antagonist Characters in *Room*

4.1.1.2.1. Old Nick: The Captor

Old Nick is one of the characters categorized as an antagonist with static character. His character does not change during the story. In his appearance, the narrator describes that: “His hair has some white and it's smaller than his ears” (Donoghue, 2010: 30). He is the captor of Ma and Jack. Old Nick is not his real name, Jack only gives him name according to a character on TV and the readers never know his real name. Old Nick has a control issue as he easily gets mad. He never takes care of

Jack and never cares about the others. He is a person who does several abusive actions to Ma. His character does not describe as much as Ma and Jack, the author acknowledges the reader that he is not a nice person and rather abusive.

4.1.1.2.2. Dr. Clay

In the novel *Room*, the other important main character is a doctor. The presence of the doctor here is to analyze and give treatment to the patient with mental health disorder. Dr. Clay appears as a kind doctor who gives treatment to Ma and Jack. As a doctor, his role is important to determine Ma and Jack's self-development outside Room. He is the antagonist character because he plays a big role in Ma's mental development in Cumberland Clinic. Jack describes Dr. Clay has "an extra-brown face with the tiniest triangle of black chin" (Donoghue, 2010: 182).

Dr. Clay is a smart doctor who loves poetry, for he often gives a rhyme both to Ma or Jack. First, he uses the Louis MacNeice's *Snow*: "World is suddener than we fancy it" (Donoghue, 2010: 217) and TS. Eliot's "Human kind cannot bear very much reality" (Donoghue, 2010: 307) when he talks to Jack. Jack tells him what things he does not like and how his condition is, then Dr. Clay replies with a poem. The second is from Emily Dickinson: "The Soul selects her own Society--Then--shuts the Door--" (Donoghue, 2010: 353). He uses this poem when he talks to Ma. As a doctor, he tries to engage with the patient using poetry. However, his rhyme will be customized depends on the situation. It is the interesting point about Dr. Clay where he can give a patient not only a prescription but also an interesting poet.

4.1.1.3. The Helper Characters

4.1.1.3.1. Noreen

Noreen is a nurse in Cumberland Clinic who helps Dr. Clay to handle Ma and Jack. As the static character, she also stands as a foil character. As a helper, Noreen will only emphasize the female protagonist character and it will not focus on her own role in the plot.

Noreen becomes one of many nurses who have a significant role in Ma's psychic development. She presents to help Ma and Jack go through a recovery period in the clinic, but her presence is more likely to be a maid than a nurse. It is because she helps Ma to doll up her medications and carries the food trays. Instead of accepting Noreen as a nurse, Ma refuses her presence because she feels like a sick person: "Can I please hold on to my medications instead of the nurses doling them out like I'm a sick person?" (Donoghue, 2010: 202).

Moreover, Noreen tries to be communicative, but she also makes a mistake that makes Ma getting mad: "'Dr. Clay said, whatever gives the lad a bit of a sense of control," says Noreen. When she smiles her eyes crinkle. "Probably a bit homesick, aren't you?'" (Donoghue, 2010: 232). She mentions "homesick" where home is refers to the place where Ma and Jack live before, then Ma confronts her that Room is not even a home, it is "a soundproofed cell" (Donoghue, 2010: 232).

4.1.1.3.2. Grandma

Grandma is Ma's adopted mother. She presents to give any information about the family of Ma and make an emphasize that Ma cannot bear her world after Room. Although she helps Jack to learn how to live without Ma, Grandma's presence as

the helper character will only emphasize Ma as the female protagonist. Grandma believes that Ma runs away.

She is the one who changes Ma's room into a gym. She decides to divorce and remarried. On the other side, Grandma is really caring. She helps Jack to stand on his own when Ma is having an intense care in the clinic after her suicide attempt. She plays a role to help Jack growing up without Ma.

4.1.1.4. The Opposite Characters in *Room*

4.1.1.4.1. Grandpa

On the contrary with Grandma, Grandpa comes up from Australia to meet Ma and feel "shudder" when he meets Jack: "'I can't be in the same room. It makes me shudder'" (Donoghue, 2010: 253). It is because he has a difficult time to deal with her daughter returns, and just like Grandma, Grandpa thinks that Ma has died. He cannot deal with Jack's presence that reminds him about Ma's captor. He tends to feel that Jack is a product of rape and cannot stand with Jack's presence. As one of the foil characters, his presence does not help much as it adds more burden to Ma.

4.1.1.4.2. Morris

As the opposite character in *Room*, Morris presents as a lawyer. He is the one who should have helped Ma to handle her cases. Morris tries to help Ma with sending a donation mail and writing up for a TV contract. He encourages Ma to have an interview with the media so Ma could get sponsors for her and Jack. As the opposite

character, Ma does not like him. She tends to think that Morris wants to commercialize their cases.

4.1.2. Conflict

In the novel *Room*, there are two types of conflict that appear in the story. The first one is internal conflict and the second one is external conflict. The internal conflict will discuss the conflict that happens within the main character, while the external conflict will discuss the conflict that happens between the main character and the other character in the novel.

4.1.2.1. Internal Conflict

Ma is described to have several conflicts within herself. The internal conflict in the story is focused on Ma as the female protagonist. The internal conflicts of the female protagonist are the conflict between Ma and Ma's experience of oppression.

No one wants to be determined and judged by the society. As Ma is having an interview with the interviewer from TV, she gets many questions and judgments from the interviewer. It makes her suddenly in tears when she is in the interview session.

"But you knew what he was missing," says the woman. "Every day he needed a wider world, and the only one you could give him got narrower. You must have been tortured by the memory of everything Jack didn't even know to want. Friends, school, grass, swimming, rides at the fair..."

"Why does everyone go on about fairs?" Ma's voice is all hoarse. "When I was a kid I hated fairs."

The woman does a little laugh.

Ma's got tears coming down her face, she puts up her hands to catch them. (Donoghue, 2010: 267)

The narrator does not describe why Ma is suddenly crying, but the argument from the interviewer may become the cause. She remembers her past and feels sad about it. It may become the big deal for her since the doctor in Cumberland Clinic will never judge her the way the interviewer does.

The day after she had an interview with the media, she suddenly wants to be alone and does not want to go outside. "'Let me sleep.' I never heard Ma say anything when she's Gone before, her voice is like some monster" (Donoghue, 2010: 268). It shows that Ma does not want anyone to disturb her as she wants to be alone. She feels the burden is stronger than she is locked in Room. The conflict between her and herself finally ends with a depressive episode where she tries to kill herself with sleeping pills.

4.1.2.2. External Conflicts

The first external conflict happens between men against the society. As the female protagonist, Ma faces conflict with the society she sticks with. Outside Room, an eleven-by-eleven-foot space where she locked for years, Ma meets the bigger society. She does not prepare anything to confront with the society, as she expects that she will have freedom after Room.

The fact that she is still nursing her son is different from the society. The society nowadays is the society where the parents put their children into a baby daycare while they get to work. The society begins to know Ma and Jack as the paparazzi starts to follow them and make them famous. They are on the TV and newspaper. The other conflict scene happens when the interviewer asks her if she misses being behind a locked door, she finally confronts the interviewer with a

statement. "Is she allowed to ask me such stupid questions?" (Donoghue, 2010: 266).

The other external conflict happens between the female protagonist against the captor. The captor, Old Nick, comes to Room almost every night. When the door is open, Jack is already in the Wardrobe and Old Nick will creak the bed. In the night where Jack plays his Jeep with remote control, Old Nick is really mad and blame Ma.

He's shouting, "What are you trying to pull?"
 Ma sounds all wobbly, she says, "What, what? Did you have a bad dream?"
 I'm biting Blanket, soft like gray bread in my mouth.
 "Did you try something? Did you?" His voice goes downer. "Because I told you before, it's on your head if--"
 "I was asleep." Ma's talking in a squashed tiny voice. "Please--look, look, it was the stupid jeep that rolled off the shelf."
 (Donoghue, 2010: 55)

Old Nick thinks that Ma is trying to kill him. Actually, it is Jack who plays his remote control that makes jeep fall to Old Nick's head. In the morning, Jack discovers that Ma has a mark on her neck. Although Jack cannot describe what happened last night, it can be seen from the marks that Old Nick is really mad and strangle her neck.

In addition, the external conflict between the female protagonist and other character happens when Ma meets the doctors from Cumberland Clinic.

He shakes his head. "Other trauma situations, yes, but I'll be honest with you, nothing like yours. Which is why we need to get it right and give you both the best possible treatment from the start."
 "Jack doesn't need *treatment*, he needs some sleep." Ma's talking through her teeth. "He's never been out of my sight and nothing happened to him, nothing like what you're insinuating"
 (Donoghue, 2010:186).

In that time, the doctors are trying to have several treatments for Jack, but she is denying it and saying that Jack does need any treatment. In fact, the doctors are trying to give the best for both Ma and Jack, but she may feel underestimated and insecure about the doctors. Ma ends up crying because she does not want Jack to have any treatment.

4.1.3. The Setting

4.1.3.1. The Setting of Place

There are three major settings of place in the novel. The first place is called Room. Donoghue describes Room as “eleven foot by eleven” (Donoghue, 2010: 263). Room is made off Old Nick’s shed and located in his backyard. Ma and Jack cannot run away because Old Nick puts a keypad with secret code numbers in the door. This place becomes important because this is the place where Ma is struggling against the oppression for the first time.

"Yeah, it's fresher. In the summer, it smells of cut grass, because we're in his backyard. Sometimes I get a glimpse of shrubs and hedges."
 "Whose backyard?"
 "Old Nick's. Room is made out of his shed, remember?"
 (Donoghue, 2010: 103).

Although Ma and Jack stay at Room for years, Ma refuses to call Room as home. She later mentions that it is “a soundproofed cell” (Donoghue, 2010: 232).

The second place is Cumberland Clinic. Cumberland Clinic becomes the first place for Jack and Ma to stay after coming out from Room. Cumberland Clinic is not only a general hospital but also a mental health hospital. It is noted from the conversation between Ma and a police.

"Now," says the wide man, "I appreciate it's late, and your son's got some abrasions that need looking at, and they're on standby for you at the Cumberland Clinic, it's a very nice facility."

"What kind of facility?"

"Ah, psychiatric."

(Donoghue, 2010: 178)

They get several medications in both physical and psychological treatments with Dr. Clay and Noreen as their assistance. In the clinic, Ma and Jack stay in a room where Jack is called it as Room Number Seven. In this place, they try to recover and get engaged with the society. The Room Number Seven has a green wall, just like a typical room in a hospital.

The floor is like Rug but fuzzy with no pattern and no edges, sort of gray, it goes all the way to the walls, I didn't know walls are green. There's a picture of a monster, but when I look it's actually a huge wave of the sea. A shape like Skylight only in the wall, I know what it is, it's a sideways window, with hundreds of wooden stripes across it but there's light coming between. (Donoghue, 2010: 190).

The third place is called "INDEPENDENT LIVING RESIDENTIAL FACILITY" (Donoghue, 2010: 338). Independent Living is a new place for Ma and Jack to start their new life after Room and Cumberland Clinic. It is a residential facility in a brown brick building. In independent living, Ma and Jack live on the sixth floor.

An apartment's like a house but all squished flat. There's five rooms, that's lucky, one is the bathroom with a bath so we can have baths not showers.

...

The stove does flames like at Grandma's. The next to the kitchen is the living room that has a couch and a low-down table and a super-big TV in it.

(Donoghue, 2010: 337)

It can be seen that Independent Living has a facility like a general house. From Independent Living, Jack starts to learn how to live physically independent from

Ma. Here, Ma and Jack are starting a new life separated from Grandma and also the doctors. Ma and Jack move to this place because Ma wants to start a new life in a new completely different place and she does not want to be haunted by her past.

4.1.3.2. The Setting of Time

The setting of time in the novel *Room* happens from late winter in March until summer in May. When Ma and Jack are in Room, the season is still the late winter. It can be seen from the following quotation when Ma says it to Jack: “Oh, it won’t. It’s April in three days” (Donoghue, 2010: 87). Because Ma and Jack come from Room, they have to adapt to the environment especially Jack who just has his first time to enjoy the free air.

When they walk outside the Cumberland Clinic as one of the treatments, the narrator explains the spring atmosphere where the sky looks bright and people spend much time outside. At the Cumberland Clinic, they also celebrate Easter shortly after. Ma has to stay at the Cumberland Clinic for three or four weeks. When they decide to stay in the Independent Living, Jack says that summer has arrived: “Tomorrow is May Day, that means summer's coming and there's going to be a parade” (Donoghue, 2010: 355).

4.1.3.3. The Setting of Social Environment

Ma comes from the middle-class family. It is proven on how much they can afford the cost of the mental health institution for Ma and Jack. It is never mentioned that their cost will be fully funded by the institution or Ma’s parents. Ma has to go to an interview to search for a sponsor who can pay their bill. Although Ma is an adopted child, her adoptive parents send her to college.

It also can be seen from the house where her mother lives. In the house, they have a personal fitness facility and all the rooms are divided into separate rooms. Jack describes that he is hard to learn because his Grandma's house has many rooms: "The doors I'm let go in anytime are the kitchen and the living room and the fitness suite and the spare room and the basement, also outside the bedroom that's called the landing, like where airplanes would land but they don't" (Donoghue, 2010: 295). Moreover, after Ma's lost, her adoptive father chose to move to Australia. It can be concluded that Ma's family comes from the middle class who can spend their money to build personal fitness and travel out the continent.

Ma comes from a quite religious family where she also teaches Jack about praising the God. Jack usually gives thank to "Baby Jesus" before he eats something: "'I eat so many bacon I lose count, when I say, 'Thank you, Baby Jesus,' people stare because I think they don't know him in Outside'" (Donoghue, 2010: 215). On the other side, the way Jack praises the God may differ from common people. It is because he always says God as "Baby Jesus". They never have a proper prayer because they cannot go to the church both in Room or Cumberland Clinic. In Independent Living, Ma and Jack can finally go to church: "We go to two different churches. I like the one with the multicolored windows but the organ is too loud" (Donoghue, 2010: 351).

4.2. Extrinsic Elements

4.2.1. The Issue of Feminism

The social feminist theory is focused on the connection between oppression of women and other oppression in the society. However, the social feminist believes

that the root of oppression is the patriarchal system. In this case, Ma as the female protagonist character is facing oppression in many different forms. She is the victim of false imprisonment when she is being kidnapped and raped by a man who wants to fulfill his sexual desire.

The man who had kidnapped Ma builds a room, which is originally his shed, with a fence neatly installed in every corner: "When he was turning the shed into Room," says Ma, "he hid a layer of fence under the floor joists, and in all the walls and even the roof, so I could never ever cut through." (Donoghue, 2010: 106). The existence of a fence in every corner implies that a woman cannot run anywhere. She is shaped and structured to please a man without any resistance. It is also quite depressing where she has to stay in the Room without seeing the outside, but she can only see a glimpse of the outside from a skylight. This situation is similar to the story of Rapunzel from children's fairy tale where she is imprisoned in a very high tower and can only looking the outside from a window.

After facing the sexual exploitation in Room, she faces the bigger society where she had been left for seven years. She confronts a smaller range of a patriarchal society in the Room and also a bigger patriarchal society in Cumberland Clinic. As the media, the TV plays a big role in how the society sees the female protagonist.

"And we're honored that you've chosen this show to tell it. Now, without necessarily putting it in terms of, say, Stockholm syndrome, many of our viewers are curious, well, concerned to know if you found yourself in any way . . . emotionally dependent on your captor" (Donoghue, 2010: 260).

In the first half of the twenty-first century, TV is very much influencing how people act, as well as newspapers. It is also an implication of capitalism in which society is controlled by those who have power.

As a result, the female protagonist cannot have her normal life back because people have seen her in newspaper and TV as “somebody”. This also gives burden to the female protagonist that she is being socially alienated because she is different. It makes her unable to cope with the society and feels humiliated. The patriarchal system followed with the portrait of capitalism makes the female protagonist experiences oppression. Nevertheless, she does not give up and empowers herself to face society and gets up on her own feet to oppose the oppression and no longer become the kind of mentally ill woman.

4.2.2. The Patriarchal Society

Ma, the female protagonist character faces patriarchal society in the different range and capacity. Making it easier to explain, the differentiation will be divided into two major places. The first is a place called Room, the place where she confronts a smaller range of patriarchal society. The second is Cumberland Clinic, a new society where the female protagonist sticks with and confronts a wider range of patriarchal society.

a. Room: a Small Patriarchal Space

In the place called Room, there is consist of three people who have a close relationship but not a family. Although it is illegal, Ma, Old Nick, and Jack is a family by blood. Old Nick, as the biological father of Jack, never care about Jack. He does not seem to care about anyone else more than himself. As a captor, his role

is directly described as a man who treats a woman as an inferior. He comes as a rapist and never puts himself in a position where he should have a responsibility of a father. Old Nick comes as the first embodiment of patriarchal society in the smaller range. He comes with the role of a man that always put a woman as a powerless and subject to man. He makes Ma need him the most to stay alive. This control encourages him to oppress Ma to do what he wants her to do.

Ma is rather powerless in the Room. She will do everything only to make her and her son safe and alive. The important thing is, as she confesses to the interviewer from a TV, she becomes a Stepford wife. The term Stepford wife originally comes from Ira Levin's novel, *The Stepford Wives* (1972).¹

Different from the Levin's novel, the female protagonist in this story is not comfortable being dependent on her man. Ma as the female protagonist consciously faces the oppression and unable to act on her own. As a woman, Ma is forced to become a Stepford wife in Room to serve man willingly and without resistance. However, this makes sense because she wants to survive and wants to protect her son. She really becomes a Stepford wife who is "flawlessly coifed". It can be seen that she makes everything organized. She takes the house cores in the Room like nursing, cleaning, laundry, and cooking.

"Are you coming to bed?" asks Ma in that funny high voice.

¹ The novel tells about a woman photographer named Joanna Eberhart who witnesses a new phenomenon in her new environment where she finds an intellectual woman around her has become a robot because their husband created them so (Kingston, 2006). Anne Kingston in *The Meaning of Wife: A Provocative Look at Women and Marriage in the Twenty* states that a perfect wife according to Stepford Wife style "is an artificial construct--flawlessly coifed, sexually willing, endlessly agreeable. As a male character in William Goldman's popular 1975 movie adaptation promised, "She'll cook, she'll clean, she'll be like one of those robots in Disneyland."" (Kingston, 2006).

"Let me get my shoes off." There's a sort of grunt, I hear something drop on Floor. "You're the one hassling me about renovations before I'm here two minutes . . ." (Donoghue, 2010: 78).

The second point of the Stepford wife is “sexually willing”. It can be seen that Ma is forced to be sexually willing every time Old Nick comes to Room and she will never refuse to come to bed. Often, she will offer him to immediately come to bed because as soon as he comes to bed, he will leave early too. The third point of the Stepford wife is “endlessly agreeable”. Ma will never say no to everything Old Nick wants her to do because Old Nick will never accept Ma to say no.

The phenomenon of the Stepford wife appears as the product of the patriarchal society. The men described in the Levin’s novel are intended to seek status in the society and make their wives stay in the house to please them. It is similar to Ma who was kidnapped and locked in the Room by Old Nick. His purpose by locking Ma in the Room is solely to fulfill his sexual desires and she is created by her captor to become a sexual slave. This state of sexual exploitation forced Ma to be a single parent to Jack. Old Nick as Jack’s biological father does not even care about Jack's presence. As the female protagonist character, she experiences the imprisonment as the effect of the patriarchal system by her captor.

b. Cumberland Clinic and the Bigger Range of Society

In the novel *Room*, the other important main place is Cumberland Clinic. Ma and Jack as victims are getting out from place called Room, and the police bring them to Cumberland Clinic, a mental health institution. They think that Ma and Jack need to have a healing, so they stay in the clinic to have several medical cares. The female

protagonist character is being treated by the male characters, in this case, a doctor, and a lawyer.

One of the main reasons why Ma wants to get out of Room is because she wants to be free, but Ma confronts a bigger patriarchal society after Room. She cannot express herself to discover her new environment and she does not allow to be free. In Cumberland Clinic, she meets Dr. Clay, a doctor who assist her treatment. Dr. Clay appears as the embodiment of a man in the society with a status. In this case, he is a doctor of a mental health patient. Furthermore, as a doctor, his task is to assess the condition of his patient. As a mental health patient, Ma often gets a judgment from Dr. Clay. As a result, she cannot easily heal, but she gets an oppression.

He and Ma talk about stuff like why she can't get to sleep, tachycardia and re-experiencing. "Try these, just one before bed," he says, writing something on his pad. "And anti-inflammatories might work better for your toothache . . ."

"Can I please hold on to my medications instead of the nurses doling them out like I'm a sick person?" (Donoghue, 2010: 202).

As a patient at the Cumberland Clinic, Ma must obey what her doctors say. She is treated like a mentally ill person, while she refuses to be treated like that. This situation puts the female protagonist as someone who is weak and cannot do anything. Undergoing the treatment in the clinic, the activity of the female protagonist is also limited by the doctors. The doctor forbids Ma to meet too many people and thus she becomes isolated with the outside world.

The other patriarchal system portrayed in the story is when Ma faces her lawyer. Morris is a lawyer who will defend her case. Morris comes as the man who

should have helped Ma, but he only does his job as a lawyer regardless of Ma's psychic state. Morris sends a donation mail and writes up for a TV contract. He encourages Ma to have an interview with the media so Ma could get sponsors for her and Jack. Ma confronts him that she thinks Morris wants to commercialize them: ““You think we should sell ourselves before somebody else does”” (Donoghue, 2010: 224). As a client, Ma does not have another choice whether she like Morris' presence or not. She can only believe in Morris who should have helped her. As a woman who is judged as a weak, she is not allowed to get the freedom she wants to achieve. She meets the doctor and lawyer who puts her as a woman who needs help from men. However, this situation makes her feel physically and psychologically oppressed.

4.2.3. The Oppression

The form of oppression experienced by the female protagonist can be classified as subjective oppression, objective oppression, psychological oppression, and material oppression. The female protagonist's struggles against oppression will be divided into two major places. Room and Cumberland Clinic are places where Ma is facing oppression in several forms.

4.2.3.1. Room: Subjective and Material Oppression

a. The Subjective Oppression of the Female Protagonist

This kind of oppression concerns with the judgment or feeling of the female protagonist as the oppressed person which is systematically and unjustly harmed as a member of a group. The female protagonist becomes a sexual slave to Old Nick, kept out of the neighborhood and locked up in the Room for years. The subjective

oppression focuses on the judgment received by the female protagonist as the oppressed and concerns about the feelings she felt.

"I used to be scared to go to sleep, in case he came back," says Ma, "but when I was asleep was the only time I wasn't crying, so I slept about sixteen hours a day."

...

"I drove myself crazy looking at my watch and counting the seconds. Things spooked me, they seemed to get bigger or smaller while I was watching them, but if I looked away they started sliding. When he finally brought the TV, I left it on twenty-four/seven, stupid stuff, commercials for food I remembered, my mouth hurt wanting it all. Sometimes I heard voices from the TV telling me things" (Donoghue, 2010: 106).

In this case, Ma feels very scared when she comes to a place where she called Room for the first time. She cannot deal with the situation in Room and tries to escape until it hurts herself. She can easily recognize her feeling about being imprisoned. She tries to discover Room but it makes herself "crazy", and she tries everything to overcome her feeling, and it can be seen that she uses TV as her companion. Yet, everything she cannot get become such an illusion for her and she can only eat what her captor brings her.

"You're a basket case, you know that?"

"I can be quiet," she says, she's nearly whispering, I hear her breath all scratchy. "You know how quiet I can be, so long as you leave him alone. It's all I've ever asked."

Old Nick snorts. "You ask for stuff every time I open the door."

"It's all for Jack."

(Donoghue, 2010: 83-84)

The quotation above shows Ma is being harassed by Old Nick and he calls her as "a basket case". A basket case means something is four-legged and not functioning well or incapacitated. In this case, as a woman, she has no freedom for herself and underestimated. She is a basket case for Old Nick who then puts her as

someone who is incapable and cannot do anything as she can only surrender to the situation. Her position as a woman is not appreciated and is aligned with an object.

b. Material Oppression

Material oppression deals with losses suffered by the oppressed. This kind of oppression affects the physical needs of the oppressed. The female protagonist is imprisoned in Room where she no longer has her own physical space. As a prisoner, the female protagonist's access to the outside world is being restricted. The material loss is more subtle as it relates to the daily need of the oppressed.

"He was right there, watching." Ma's nearly shouting. "He didn't know the first thing about babies getting born, he hadn't even bothered to Google it. I could feel the top of her head, it was all slippery, I pushed and pushed, I was shouting, 'Help, I can't, help me--' And he just stood there."

--

"You should ask Old Nick for medicine for her, for Sunday-treat."

Ma shakes her head. "The cord was all knotted around her neck."

"Was she still tied in you?"

"Till he cut it." (Donoghue, 2010: 229)

In giving birth to her first baby, it can be seen that Ma does not get any help either physically or psychologically. While in the process of giving birth a woman needs support from people around her. She did it alone while Old Nick only saw it without doing anything. As the oppressed, Ma could not have access to a normal childbirth like the others.

Another restricted material source is the limitation of daily needs. It can be seen that Old Nick will bring their daily needs in a Sunday Treat. They will only have several goods to get, or they will have no treats at all if the goods are not easy to find: "I just mean, he might have to go to two or three stores, and that would make him cranky. And what if he didn't find the impossible thing, then we probably

wouldn't get Sunday treat at all" (Donoghue, 2010: 26). They cannot get what they really want to eat, even they cannot get the medicine for their physical health.

4.2.3.2. Cumberland Clinic: Objective and Psychological Oppression

a. Objective Oppression

As the objective oppression is external to the oppressed people, Ma, as the female protagonist happens to have a misperceived judgment by people around her. The fact that she is just out of a dungeon makes the society judge her as a victim. Meeting doctors in Cumberland Clinic, Ma and Jack are having a medical treatment first. Previously, the one that brings Ma and Jack to the Cumberland Clinic is the police. The police think that as a victim they may feel traumatic. From the Cumberland Clinic, the objective oppression upon Ma as the female protagonist character is portrayed.

"We're just following the protocol for cases like this," says Dr. Clay.

"Oh, you see lots of cases like this here, do you?" Ma's mad, I can hear it.

He shakes his head. "Other trauma situations, yes, but I'll be honest with you, nothing like yours. Which is why we need to get it right and give you both the best possible treatment from the start."

"Jack doesn't need *treatment*, he needs some sleep." Ma's talking through her teeth. "He's never been out of my sight and nothing happened to him, nothing like what you're insinuating."

"Yes, I did." There's tears all down Ma's face, now, there's one all dark on the edge of her mask. Why are they making her cry? "And tonight, what he's had to--he's asleep on his feet--" (Donoghue, 2010: 186)

The judgment arises because they are doctors who think Ma is a patient. In this case, the doctor has a right to determine the condition of a person, yet the doctor only sees it physically without considering the psychological state and social background of a person. As a result, Ma does not like the way they treat her and her

son like a sick person. Ma does feel different but she is not a sick person who needs medication and treatment. The way she refuses the doctors describes that Ma gets the misperceived judgment. Because she feels that she is forced and uncomfortable with the doctors' judgment, tears are falling down in Ma's face.

The other objective oppression is depicted by how the society sees Ma and Jack. As the victim of false imprisonment for seven years, people begin to search for her. Paparazzi is following her every time she gets out of the clinic. She is being famous, and become an object of news in newspaper and TV: "'Believe me,' the woman is saying to Ma, 'we're just trying to help *you* tell *your* story to the world.' She looks down at the paper in her lap..." (Donoghue, 2010: 261). She gets pushed by other people's opinion about her life. This kind of things makes Ma feels more alienated as someone different. Ma finds out how people out there talk about her through TV and newspaper. However, her main purpose to get out from the Room is not achieved perfectly. She cannot live freely because people recognize her as the victim of a false imprisonment.

b. Psychological Oppression

The pressure from the society makes the female protagonist feels the psychological burden. The first case is depicted from the first time Ma meets his adoptive father after seven years. In this case, his father could not accept Jack as Ma's son because Jack will remind him of the person who had kidnapped and imprisoned Ma in the Room.

He's looking at the table, he's all sweaty on his face. "No offense."
 "What do you mean, 'no offense'?" Ma's talking nearly in a shout.
 "I can't be in the same room. It makes me shudder."
 "There's no it. He's a boy. He's five years old," she roars.

"I'm saying it wrong, I'm--it's the jet lag. I'll call you later from the hotel, OK?" The man who's Grandpa is gone past me without looking, he's nearly at the door.

There's a crash, Ma's banged the table with her hand. "It's not OK."
(Donoghue, 2010: 251)

As a mother, she feels that her nearest person does not accept and support her. The fact that her parents are divorced and her father cannot accept Jack as her son gives her a psychological burden in the situation where she should be encouraged to adapt to the new environment. As a result, the female protagonist as the oppressed reduces her own self-image and value.

4.2.4. The Struggles of the Female Protagonist to Overcome the Oppression

As the female protagonist has been through several forms of oppression, there are struggles that are interesting to be explained. For every oppression, the female protagonist has her own way to overcome it.

In *Room*, the female protagonist faces the perpetrator and faces subjective and material oppression. The subjective oppression puts the female protagonist into a position where she cannot be able to get what she wants and she becomes a prisoner in *Room*. She is also being sexually oppressed by her captor. As a result, she finds herself depressed about it. She suffers to keep alive as she will one day try to get out from there. She tries anything and hurt herself when she wants to escape.

““When he was at work I tried to get out, I tried everything. I stood on tiptoe on the table for days scraping around the skylight, I broke all my nails. I threw everything I could think of at it but the mesh is so strong, I never even managed to crack the glass”” (Donoghue, 2010: 110).

....

“So, Jack, we mustn't try and hurt him again. When he came back the next night, he said, number one, nothing would ever make him tell me the code. And number two, if I ever tried a stunt like that again, he'd go away and I'd get hungrier and hungrier till I died” (Donoghue, 2010: 111).

After trying many things, Ma could not try to escape again and chose to survive. She faces life in Room with the thought that she cannot just die. Moreover, she deals with this situation. She struggles in the Room becoming a sexual slave of Old Nick. She does not only feel depressed, but she bears the burden of everything on her shoulder. This proves a tremendous struggle as she survives and does not attempt suicide. In another side, the fact that she gave birth by herself is something inevitable. A woman needs a support from her loved ones and a help from the expert to give birth. Nevertheless, it is quite depressing to struggle and bear the burden of giving birth to a child, but Ma tries to deal with it. Although the first baby died because she did not know how to give birth, she keeps struggling to make the second baby alive. She successfully gave birth to the Jack without any help from anybody. Old Nick, who saw her in the first time she struggles to give birth, does not try to help her. As she feels traumatic from the first baby who died, she refuses Old Nick to see her child on the second birth. This continues for five years where Ma did not let Old Nick touch or even to see Jack.

The other struggle appears when Ma tries to overcome the restricted materials for the daily needs. They also suffer from the lack of food. They consume vitamins daily to keep their body away from sickness.

“Vitamins are medicine for not getting sick and going back to Heaven yet. I never want to go, I don't like dying but Ma says it might be OK when we're a hundred and tired of playing. Also she takes a killer. Sometimes she takes two, never more than two, because some things are good for us but too much is suddenly bad” (Donoghue, 2010: 24).

In the other side, it is not easy to raise and educate a child in an eleven-by-eleven foot room with any restricted sources of food and things. Children should be raised in a place where they can develop themselves. Jack is only a five-year-old boy and his curiosity about anything is something natural. As a mother, Ma proves that she raises him well. Ma, as a mother, has changed Room as the world for her son. It is not easy to explain that there is big world outside Room. She persisted and determined her life to her son and she tells her son that someday they will go outside.

Another struggle appears when Ma confronts her adoptive father. As a daughter who does not meet her father for years, she should miss him very much. It is not easy to deal with the situation because her adoptive father does not accept Jack. The reason is that it reminds him about the captor and what he did to her beloved daughter. Dealing with this situation, Ma struggles to keep away from her father. She chooses not to make any contact with her father ever again. The denial of her father has made her feels another great burden of her past.

Ma as the female protagonist has determined her struggles to overcome the oppression. The great burden she feels and the suffering she has been through does not stop her to keep struggle to get free. As a woman who has been experienced oppression, Ma has the spirit to be free and return to see the outside world, continuing life and being free from the oppression in the Room.

4.2.5. The Effect of Oppression on the Female Protagonist

The female protagonist experiences several forms of oppression from subjective oppression, material oppression, objective oppression, and psychological

oppression. After experiencing so many kinds of oppression, there are several consequences that occur to the female protagonist. Some effects of oppression on the female protagonist are the unstable emotion, unable to cope with the society and feel humiliated, and experiencing the post-traumatic stress disorder.

The first non-physical impact of oppression is the unstable emotion of the female protagonist. The female protagonist seems to cry more often and angry for no apparent reason: “There's tears falling all on the blanket. Ma's nodding and crying but on mute” (Donoghue, 2010: 230). It can be seen that the female protagonist is crying but there is something that holds her cry. In addition, she also cries when the doctor wants to check her son. The reason is that she thinks that she keeps her son safe all this time, so she does not let her child get a treatment because she feels it is not necessary.

The changes of emotion begin to happen in the female protagonist's life after she leaves the Room. She gets excited to live out from Room, yet the female protagonist does not really pay attention about her son's acceptance in change: “Ma wipes my face with her hand, that spreads the tears. "Sorry," she says, "sorry. I guess I'm moving too fast,"” (Donoghue, 2010: 193). Ma is too excited to be outside the Room, but she does not realize that her child is not used to getting rid of her. In addition, she is too excited to contact her old friends, but she cancel her intentions and returns to her room in the clinic. In the room where Jack called it as Room Number Seven, she says to her son that she had turned into a strange person:

Ma holds me tight. "Jack," she says, "I'm a bit strange this week, aren't I?"
I don't know, because everything's strange.
"I keep messing up. I know you need me to be your ma but I'm having to remember how to be me as well at the same time and it's . . ."

(Donoghue, 2010: 248).

This sudden change of emotion is the result of the oppression she experiences. In the quotation, it shows that the female protagonist feels something has changed from her and she feels uncomfortable with it. The feeling arises after she cannot find a way to contact her old friends and ends up in another again with her son. The fact that she is no longer in the same world as the world before she was in the Room makes her spirit quickly disappear.

The other effect of oppression on the female protagonists is the difficulty to cope with the society. This is because she feels different from the community that she feels she cannot get into it. ““No, I mean everything feels different, but it's because I'm different”” (Donoghue, 2010: 260). The female protagonist says that “I’m different”, it means that she has lowered her self-worth and feels so. As the result, the female protagonist feels humiliated because the judgment that comes continuously from her surrounding makes her no longer able to be part of the society.

4.2.5.1. Suicide of the Female Protagonist

The female protagonist experiences amount of oppression in the different form. As the effect of oppression, the female protagonist suffers from a psychiatric illness, psychical health, and the post-traumatic disorder which lead her to commit suicide. The female protagonist commits suicide when she is in the Cumberland Clinic. In accordance with what Loue and Sajatovic say in *Encyclopedia of Women's Health*, there are several factors that influence a person to commit suicide.

In this novel, the female protagonist experiences some social and psychological pressure when she comes out from the place where she experiences false imprisonment. In Room, the female protagonist is only dealing with the captor and experiencing the oppression directly. Meanwhile, when she is in the Cumberland Clinic, there are many people who stand against her. First, as a woman as well as a mother, she is judged incapable to heal herself by the doctors of the Cumberland Clinic. Her situation as a victim of a false imprisonment makes her become a patient in a mental health institution where she needs to follow the treatment from the doctors. In addition to the forced treatment, Ma also gets a false judgment from the society. The denial from people around her about Jack as her son also affects her psychic health. In the end, she begins to show a depressed attitude and lose control.

I take off my shoes but not my clothes, I get in with Ma at last. She's warmy soft, I snuggle up but carefully. The pillow smells bad...
 The bad is vomit, I remember from our Great Escape. "Wake up," I say to Ma, "you did sick on the pillow."
 She doesn't switch on, she doesn't groan even or roll over, she's not moving when I pull her. This is the most Gone she's ever.
 (Donoghue, 2010: 279)

The suicide happens at the end of her depressive episodes that occur sequentially. The female protagonist begins to seclude herself into the room and away from everyone including her son. In the end, she is found trying to kill herself with sleeping pills. In accordance with Loue and Sajatovic's analysis, the female protagonist tends to overdose in attempting suicide. In feminist perspective, suicide is also a "liberation" where she will no longer feel the suffering she has experienced. Suicide is considered as problem-solving so the female protagonist because does

not have to face people who try to knock her down. This is also a proof that the mental health institution cannot ensure the recovery of their patients but rather become another prison for the patients.

4.2.6. The Power Feminism

After experiencing the suicide, the female protagonist undergoes a period of healing where she is far from people including her son. This part of being alone is the time where she tries to recover and redefining herself. The female protagonist refuses to stay in the Cumberland Clinic any longer and she does not want to stay with her mother. She chooses to live in a new place called Independent Living.

The stage in which the female protagonist chooses to live in Independent Living shows that she objects to be a victim of oppression. A woman should be able to rise from the oppression that she has experienced and makes it as a power to live her own life without the definition of the people around her, especially men. On the other side, the narrator describes that the wall of Independent Living is "too white" (Donoghue, 2010: 342). Thus, it becomes the symbol of a new start.

"What's wrong with them?"

"They're too white. Hey, you know what, we could buy cork squares from the store and stick them up all over."

"No way Jose." After a minute, she says, "This is a fresh start, remember?" (Donoghue, 2010: 342).

The female protagonist does not want her son to put the cork squares on the wall because it will remind her of Room. She also gives her son an understanding that they have began their fresh start. Ma believes that she can begin her life by leaving everything in Room. Yet, it does not come all at once, and the female

protagonist still struggles with her past. One of the ways to get rid of it is to stand on her own feet.

"It's perverse," Ma is telling Dr. Clay, "all those years, I was craving company. But now I don't seem up to it."

.....

"Most days . . . Jack's enough for me."

" 'The Soul selects her own Society--Then--shuts the Door--' " That's his poem voice.

Ma nods. "Yeah, but it's not how I remember myself."

"You had to change to survive."

Noreen looks up. "Don't forget, you'd have changed anyway. Moving into your twenties, having a child--you wouldn't have stayed the same."

(Donoghue, 2010: 352)

The quotation is taken from Ma's conversation with Dr. Clay and Noreen talking about Ma's condition after she decides to move to Independent Living. It is noted from the quotation that Ma encourages herself and raises the power feminism. She does not try to stand with her "vulnerability and pain", but she chooses the "pleasures and strength of femaleness" (Wolf, 1994: 53). The female protagonist finally has the determination to show her power as a woman who has had enough of patriarchal system and oppression.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Room is a novel written by Emma Donoghue about the struggle of a mother and her son to get out from a place where they are locked for years called Room. The protagonist character in the novel are Ma and Jack, while the antagonist are Old Nick and Dr. Clay. There are also the helper which are Noreen and Grandma, and the opposer which are Grandpa and Morris. The female protagonist undergoes internal and external conflict with several characters in the story. There are three setting of places in the novel which are Room, Cumberland Clinic, and Independent Living.

Ma, as the leading female protagonist, faces four forms of oppression. At first, the female protagonist faces the subjective oppression because she is locked in Room by her captor, Old Nick. She later experiences the materials oppression because she cannot easily get her needs. The third oppression she gets is objective oppression. The female protagonist faces the objective oppression in the psychiatric called Cumberland Clinic. She meets the doctor, the nurse, and the bigger society after Room. Because she cannot adapt to the society, she faces another form of oppression which is psychological oppression. This oppression is the result of denial and force she gets from people around her.

Experiencing many forms of oppression, there are several consequences that occur to Ma as the female protagonist. Some effects of oppression on Ma are the

unstable emotion, unable to cope with the society and feel humiliated, and experiencing the post-traumatic stress disorder. As the result, Ma commits suicide with sleeping pills when she is alone in her room.

To overcome her oppression and to recover from her condition, Ma is kept away from other people. She gets an intensive care with the doctor and the nurse from Cumberland Clinic. Fortunately, she is successfully recovered and go back home to meet her son, Jack. After going back home, Ma does not choose to live with her mother. She rather chooses to live a new life with Jack in Independent Living. She makes her son as her strength and tries to forget about her vulnerability and pain in the past. Ma shows the determination of power as a woman and stands up against patriarchal system and oppression.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Booker, M. Keith. 1998. *A Practical Introduction on Literary Theory and Criticism*. New York. Longman Publishers USA.
- Bressler, Charles E. 1999. *Literary Criticism an Introduction to Theory and Practice. Second Edition*. USA: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Charlton, James I. 1998. *Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability, Oppression, and Empowerment*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Cudd, Ann E. 2006. *Analyzing Oppression*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- De Beauvoir, Simone. 1956. *The Second Sex*. London: Lowe and Brydone.
- Donoghue, Emma. 2010. *Room*. New York: Little Brown Company.
- Donoghue, Emma. "Biography of Emma Donoghue". Accessed October 19, 2016. 10.37 AM. < <https://www.emmadonoghue.com/emma-donoghue.html>>.
- Frye, Marilyn. "Oppression". In Alison Bailey & Chris Cuomo. *The Feminist Philoshopy Reader*. (pp. 41-49). 2008. New York: Mc Graw Hill.
- Garner, Kate & Rebecca Munford. "Feminism". In Michael Ryan, Gregory Castle, Robert Eaglestone, and M. Keith Booker (Ed). *The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory* (pp. 595-605). 2011. UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Griffin, Chritine. "Experiencing Power". In Nickie Charles and Felicia Hughes-Freeland (Ed). *Practicing Feminim* (pp. 181-201). 2003. New York: Routledge.
- Habib, M. A. R. 2005. *Modern Literary Criticism and Theory: A History of literary criticism: from Plato to the present*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.
- Heidst, Jon & Johannes P. Wheeldon. 2014. *Introducing Criminological Thinking: Maps, Theories, and Understanding*. USA: SAGE Publications.
- Holman, C. Hugh. 1985. *A Handbook to Literature*. Indianapolis: ITT Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing Company, Inc.
- Jaeger, Gary. 2012. *Repression, Integrity and Practical Reasoning*. USA: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Johnson, Allan G. 2005. *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy (Revised and Updated Edition)*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Loue, Sana and Martha Sajatovic. 2004. *Encyclopedia of Women's Health*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Meyer, Michael. 2011. *Literature to Go*. Boston: Bedford's (St. Martin).
- Millet, Kate. 1972. *The Sexual Politics*. Great Britain: Hazzel Watson & Viney Ltd.
- Naomi Wolf. 1994. *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How to Use It*. New York: Fawcett Columbine.
- Perrine, Laurence. 1988. *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*. Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Potter, James L. 1967. *Elements of Literature*. New York: The Odyssey Press.
- Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson, & Peter Brooker. 2005. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Tong, Rosmarie. 2009. *Feminist Thought, 3rd edition*. Colorado: Westview Press.
- UNODC. 2014. *Handbook on Women and Imprisonment*. Vienna: United Nations.
- Wellek, Rene., Austin Warren. 1973. *Theory of Literature*. London: Penguin Books.
- Woloch, Alex. 1970. *The One vs The Many*. United Kingdom: Princenton Universtiy Press.
- Young, Iris. "Five Faces of Oppression". In Heldke, Lisa & Peg O'Connor (Ed). *Oppression, Privilege, and Resistance*. (pp. 37-63). Boston: McGraw Hill.